

# Walk through the Gospels

## A Jet Tour Overview

As we begin our overview of the New Testament tonight let's first step back and see the big picture. Someone has written an:

### AN ARCHITECTS VIEW OF THE SCRIPTURES

The Bible is like a majestic palace constructed with precious oriental stone comprising 66 stately chambers, each an individual room, yet a part of the whole edifice: incomprehensible, majestic, glorious and sublime.

As we go into the vestibule, the book of Genesis, and find recorded the mighty works of God in creation this vestibule, has access to the law courts. Which, when passing thru come to the picture gallery of the historical books in which hung wall scenes, battles, portraits of men of valor. Battles and valiant heros line the walls.

On to the philosophers chamber Job. Then into the music room (Psalms) where we linger to hear the grandest harmonies ever that fell on human ears. Pressing on into the business office of Proverbs where very center hangs the motto "Righteousness exalts a nation", sin reproach any people. Then, the research department Ecclesiastes, into the conservatory of Song of Solomon where the fragrant aroma of the sweetest fruits and flowers and sweetest songs of birds greet us.

On to the observatory where we find prophets busy with strong telescopes looking for the appearing of the bright and morning star, the Son of Righteousness.

Walking across we enter the audience chamber of the King, the Gospels, where hang four lifelike portraits of the King himself in the perfections of His Beauty.

On to the workroom of the Holy Spirit - Acts, then into the correspondence room where we find Peter, James, John, Paul and Jude bending busy over their writing tables under the supervision of Holy Spirit of truth.

Finally into the throne room where echo the grandest praise and honor to the King enthroned fills vast chambers with portraits of solemn scenes of doom on walls but all associated with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

From creation to culmination. THE NEW TESTAMENT begins and ends with Christ. It opens with His arrival, moves to His ministry of three years, His death, His glorious

resurrection, His ministering for 40 days. (We know this because it says in Acts that he remained alive after His passion for 40 days). His ascension, and then ten days the apostles were left along, fearful, waiting for the promise that Christ gave; that promise does come in the day of Pentecost, which "pentecost" means 50 days -- after 50 days Christ sent His Spirit as he promised. Just as He promised, the Spirit came and poured out His Spirit on the fiftieth day. After the day of Pentecost was fully come, the birth of the church. Acts - 1-8 deals primarily with Peter. Then starting in Acts 9 Saul comes on the scene. Paul is the focal point as God moves his redemptive program out to the Gentile world in particular. Then after letters (Epistles) of comfort and instruction, Jesus closes the book of history as He takes back His wayward creation in the Revelation.

I. THE GOSPELS The Lord promised that David would never lack a son to sit on the throne, and the next one thousand years present an uninterrupted, generation-by-generation list of male descendants-the longest known. None of the gospels are chronological histories or biographies in our modern sense.

They are rather a representation of the four groups of people then and now in the world. The Jews who loved the Scriptures and the prophecies of God. They would only listen to one of their own. So Matthew speaks to the Jews and the deeply religious of our day.

Mark spoke to the Romans. These were the leaders and leadership and action impressed them. They knew nothing of Scriptures but everything of power. So to this group comes the action packed Gospel of the powerful ministry of Christ. Mark uses the word "and" 1,375 times to tie together the endless actions of Christ. Like our modern successful business man and woman, they want a God who can powerfully meet their deepest needs.

Luke was a Greek speaking to the Greeks. The Greeks loved culture, beauty and ideas. Happiness could be found in the pursuit of truth. Luke fills his book with insights, interviews, songs and details that fascinate the inquiring mind. So today the truth seekers find Jesus in Luke!

John wrote to everyone because everyone needs to meet God and only Jesus can reveal Him. In this book we meet an absolutely powerful God in human flesh who controls and rules the Universe He created. So the best known verse is the best of all offer that God loves all and offers all His Son as their only hope!

II. Let's survey the New Testament Books by noting 27 verses. A key verse for each book!

A. MATTHEW "Christ our King" Matthew: King Jesus (2:2) Matthew 2:2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." (NKJV) Worship Christ the King!

Outline: The Birth and Preparation of the King 1:1 - 4:11; The King Speaks and Serves 4:12 - 25:46; The King Suffers and Triumphs in Passion Week 26:1 - 28:20.

In a gospel written for Jews, Jesus is presented in His royalty, his Jewishness is very evident. Matthew opens with the declaration that Jesus is the "Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham." In fact, eight of the twelve references to Jesus as the son of David are in Matthew, who so clearly pictures Jesus as the ideal Israelite and the ideal King of Israel.

B. MARK "Christ our Servant". Outline: Mark: Servant Jesus (10:45) Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (NKJV) Worship Christ the Servant!  
Outline: The Birth and Preparation of Servant Jesus 1:1 - 13; Servant Jesus Speaks and Serves 1:14 - 13:37; Servant Jesus Suffers and Triumphs in Passion Week 14:1 - 16:20.

In a gospel written from Peter's words to the fast paced Roman Empire, Jesus is constantly in action! Mark, perhaps the first gospel account written, opens with: "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God." God Himself ratifies the declaration in 1:11: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

C. LUKE "Christ our Savior". (19:10) Luke 19:10 "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (NKJV) Worship Christ the Savior!  
Outline: The Birth and Preparation of Savior Jesus 1:1 - 4:13; Savior Jesus Speaks and Serves 4:14 - 21:38; Savior Jesus Suffers and Triumphs in Passion Week 22:1 - 24.

In a gospel for the Greeks, we find the perfect man comes to earth. Luke talks as a physician, and describes medically how much Christ was a man -- tired, and touched with the feelings of those about Him. Like Matthew, Luke proclaims the miraculous, virgin conception of Jesus (1:26-38). He alone writes of the glory of God that was manifested at the birth of Jesus (1:9). Luke reinforces Jesus' identity with humanity by using "son of man" twenty-five times, second only to Matthew.

D. JOHN "Christ our God " (20:31) John 20:31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (NKJV)  
Outline: The Birth and Preparation of Divine Jesus 1:1 - 2:11; Divine Jesus Speaks and Serves 2:12 - 12:50; Divine Jesus Suffers and Triumphs in Passion Week 13:1 - 21.

In a gospel written to the whole world, John presents us with the Divine Jesus. He is the Son of God -- his Divinity -- the Divine nature of God is very clearly seen. We have already seen John's incredible introduction of Jesus as the Word, the Dwelling Presence and the Glory of God. He lists seven self-descriptions of Jesus as "I am" (6:35; 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1-2). John reveals Jesus as God's unique ("only begotten," KJV) Son, and refers to God as His Father more than any other book of the Bible. The Old Testament refers to God as Father only 12 times, John 120 times!

E. ACTS "Christ our Mission" (1:8) Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (NKJV)

This book is the bridge taking Christ to the whole world. In it we see the lessons Christ taught His disciples in secret now proclaimed in Holy Spirit empowered boldness. The key verse outlines the book: witnesses in Jerusalem (1-8:3); Judea and Samaria (8:4-12:25); and to the ends of the earth (13-28). Within the book come the epistles of I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon (prison epistles);

F. ROMANS "Christ our Righteousness" (1:16-17) Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (NKJV)

From about AD 57-58 written looking out the window at Corinth on Paul's 3rd journey. Paul's letter to Rome is better known in the church than any other, and is probably the singly most important book in the N.T. because it lays down the great doctrines of justification by faith alone. The key verse outline the message of the entire book as : the person of the gospel is Christ; the power is God; the purpose is salvation; the people are all; the plan is belief and the result is living by faith! Paul uses the expression "in Christ" to describe the new life of a believer. This term is found no less than 164 times, as justified in Christ " (Gal. 2:17), " God's righteousness in him " (2 Cor 5: 21). This blessed, life-penetrating secret is central to all his letters. Thus: in Romans -justification in Christ; in Corinthians -sanctification in Christ; in Galatians -freedom in Christ; in Ephesians-oneness in Christ; in Philippians-joy in Christ; in Colossians-fulness in Christ; in Thessalonians - glorification in Christ.

G. I CORINTHIANS "Christ our Solution to Spiritual Problems" (2:6-8) 1 Corinthians 2:6-7 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden [wisdom] which God ordained before the ages for our glory, (NKJV)

This letter comes about AD 57 from Ephesus on Paul's 3rd journey. At Corinth, Paul spent one-and-one-half years developing the church. His longest letters and most impassioned correspondence were to those trouble believers. Their affluent and fast-growing port town brought them an inordinate amount of contact with immorality, pagan religion, and philosophy. Their problems with arrogance, leader-worshiping cliques, immorality, divorce, and misunderstandings of spiritual gifts are systematically addressed in response to their questions. There were probably four letters written to the Corinthians. We have two; the other two the Spirit of God didn't choose to leave for us. We know this scripturally because Paul says in I Corinthians, the letter I already wrote unto you. Then he talks about in II Corinthians the letter which made you grievous.

H. II CORINTHIANS "Christ our sufficiency" (3:5) 2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as [being] from ourselves, but our sufficiency [is] from God, (NKJV)

In AD 57 Paul writes again to his beloved Corinthian church from Macedonia just after leaving Philippi.

- I. GALATIANS "Christ our liberty" (5:1) Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. (NKJV)

AD 45 from Jerusalem Council. Galatians was written to counter false teaching about Christianity and the law and the relationship between faith and works. When the grace of God through His Spirit is rooted in our lives we find His fruit. This fruit reaches into our walk with God (love, joy and peace), our walk with others (gentleness, goodness and patience), and finally into our personal walk (faith, meekness and self-control).

- J. EPHESIANS "Christ our source of all" (3:20-21) Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (NKJV)

Shortly after Paul returned to Jerusalem from his third missionary journey (A.D. 57), he was arrested in the Temple courtyard, imprisoned in Caesarea for two years, and tried by Felix and Festus. He then appealed to Agrippa to be sent to Rome for trial before Caesar. Though Agrippa comments to Festus that Paul might have been freed except for that appeal (Acts 26:32), Scripture indicates it was clearly in God's plan to send him to the empire's capital, as yet untouched by the apostles. While under house arrest in rented quarters in Rome (about A.D. 59 to 61 or 62), Paul wrote four letters known as the prison epistles. Of those, Ephesians is the best known for its tremendous theological content, which seems to drift in long, flowing statements of praise for God's work in Christ.

- K. PHILIPPIANS "Christ our Source of Joy" (1:6) Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete [it] until the day of Jesus Christ; (NKJV)

Paul and Silas visited Philippi, their first Macedonian contact, on their second missionary journey in A.D. 52. To the saints and leadership of the church, Paul writes of joyful submission to the will of God, regardless of the circumstances, and uses the aweinspiring example of Christ Jesus as the model of humility and mutual submission within the church.

- L. COLOSSIANS "Christ our life" (2:10) Colossians 2:10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. (NKJV)

Paul never ministered in nor even visited Colossae as he had Ephesus, though one of his converts, Epaphras, had planted the church (1:7-8). Unique to Colossians, is Paul's attack against a local heresy that depreciated the person of Christ and promoted ritualism, asceticism, and special, hidden knowledge. To counter that, Paul praises Jesus as the center and substance of the universe. He presents the "deeper" life (1:22-23), the "higher" life (2:6-7), the "inner" life (3:12,16) and the "outward" life (4:5).

- M. I THESSALONIANS "Christ our Hope" (3:13) 1 Thessalonians 3:13 so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. (NKJV)

Addressed to one of Paul's first churches in Greece, 1 Thessalonians encourage the young believers to endure persecution, resist false teaching, and live full and productive lives as they await Christ's certain return. In fact, each of 1

Thessalonians' five chapters ends with encouragement based on the Rapture.

- N. II THESSALONIANS "Christ our Security" (1:11-12) 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)

(The return of Christ is mentioned 318x in the 260 chapters of the New Testament). To these troubled saints Paul presents Christ as our Security when Suffering (1), when doubting (2) and when serving (3).

- O. I TIMOTHY "Christ our Leader" (4:12) 1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (NKJV)

Timothy was a special disciples in whom Paul invested much time and to whom he entrusted great responsibility. His letters to him are usually dated after the events of Acts 28; tradition tells us Paul was then released from prison and that he embarked on further missionary ventures from A.D. 62 to 67, until his final imprisonment, trial, and execution.

- P. II TIMOTHY "Christ the Goal" (4:7-8) 2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (NKJV)

- Q. TITUS "Christ our Model to Follow" (2:10-11) Titus 2:10-11 . . . adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, (NKJV)

- R. PHILEMON "Christ our source of Forgiveness" (1:18) Philemon 18 But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. (NKJV)

One of the shortest New Testament letters was written to a member of the Colossian church, Philemon, to encourage him to act more like a Christian than a Roman in accepting back his runaway slave.

- S. HEBREWS "Christ the Best of ALL" (12:2) Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (NKJV)

Sometime in the AD 60's before the Temple was destroyed, some was inspired by God to write Hebrews. Who? We cannot be sure. But the anonymity of the author does not detract from the letter's authority. Hebrews speaks powerfully of the superiority of Christ, exalting Him over the angels (1-2), Moses (3-4) and the Aaronic priesthood (5-7), as well as the superiority of His New Covenant and sacrifice over the old (8-10). Chapters 11 to 13 plead for lives of faith in light of Christ's work and examples from the faithful of old.

- T. JAMES "Christ makes our Faith Work" (1:22) James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (NKJV)

The earthly brother of Jesus who grew up with the boy Jesus was saved after the resurrection of his brother. He becomes one of the key leaders of the church. In about AD 45 as a pastor, he writes from Jerusalem. Some read James as a counter to Paul when he says, "Faith, if it has no works, is dead (2:17, NASB). But far from contradicting Paul, James was talking about life-style. He draws from a rich heritage of wisdom, the prophets, and his half-brother's Sermon on the Mount, to write about the life of faith that looks theologically correct.

U. I PETER "Christ our Victory over Suffering" (1:3) 1 Peter 1:3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (NKJV)

Some time around AD 61 Peter writes his letter encouraging all Christians to live holy and faithful lives and to be willing to suffer unjust persecution after the example of Christ. Peter challenges wives, husbands, elders, and young men to exercise humility, service, and self-control.

V. II PETER "Christ the Victory over Error" (1:16) 2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. (NKJV)

Second Peter and Jude are so alike many have wondered why both are needed in the New Testament. Because the Spirit inspired both they require careful study. Both deal urgently with an insidious and dangerous heresy that threatens the very lives of believers. Peter says the key to stability and growth is knowing God (1:5-11).

W. I JOHN "Christ our Fellowship" (1:3) 1 John 1:3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (NKJV)

John exhorts believers to show God's love Christ, by individually and sacrificially meeting the needs of others. He also commands us to turn from the world to love the Father. He stresses the danger of false teachers and false (anti-) christ. He emphasizes the apostles' teaching and the witness of the Spirit.

X. II JOHN "Christ our Source of Separation" (1:10-11) 2 John 10-11 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. (NKJV)

Y. III JOHN "Christ our Prosperity" (1:2-3) 3 John 2-3 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth [that is] in you, just as you walk in the truth. (NKJV)

Z. JUDE "Christ our Salvation" (1:3) Jude 3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (NKJV)

Jude was a second brother of Joseph and Mary in the earthly family of Jesus, who wrote a New Testament book after coming to Christ. Jude uses images stretching from before the Flood to the depths of the Pit where imprisoned

fiends of unholy service wait in chains. He gives insight into colorful Old Testament personages like Lot, Balaam, Korah, Enoch and Michael. Ending with one of the strongest verses on our secure salvation, this book is a must read!

AA. REVELATION "Christ Unveiled to Worship" (19:10) Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See [that you do] not [do that!] I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (NKJV)

From the exile of Patmos, John gives a revelation of the character of the Lamb and the sovereignty of God, both of which should encourage believers of all ages-not just the last-to "overcome the world" with their faith and faithfulness toward God. Revelation contains more hymns of praise, more words of adoration to the Lamb, the Father, and the Spirit than any other New Testament book. Rather than try to identify the dragon and his beast, adore the true Trinity, sovereign over space and time.

The book is also outlined by Revelation 1:19

"Write the things which you have seen (the vision of Christ in His glory- chapter 1),

and the things which are (the vision of Christ and His church - chapters 2-3), and the things which will take place after this. (the vision of Christ and the Universe, chapters 4-22).

BB.